

## TITLE IV—EFFECTIVE DATE

## SEC. 401. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 344, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY).

Mr. NEY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, this is the Ney-Wynn amendment, and this will be the last chance tonight, and this is not a poison pill. This amendment embodies campaign finance reform principles that respect our Constitution. It does not seek to punish or discourage those citizens who exercise their constitutional rights to participate in the political process.

This amendment bans the national parties from raising or using soft money for Federal election activities, including broadcast issue advertising. However, it would permit the national parties to continue to raise and use soft money for generic voter registration, which I believe we all know is important, and get-out-the-vote activities. The parties would also preserve the right to use such funds for fund-raising and overhead expenses.

The principal complaint leveled against so-called soft money is that it is unlimited and unregulated. This amendment addresses that complaint by limiting it and regulating it. With the passage of this amendment, no donor could contribute an amount over \$20,000 to any political committee. As I previously indicated, the use of the funds would be restricted to certain activities.

Shays-Meehan does absolutely nothing to restrict how unions and corporations spend soft money. Under current law, unions and corporations can spend unlimited amounts of soft money communicating with their members, soliciting those members for contributions and engaging in such political activities as registering voters and getting out the vote. Shays-Meehan would not stop these groups from using their soft dollars in this way. What Shays-Meehan would do is prevent the national parties from using so-called soft dollars in a similar fashion.

I really do not think we should restrict the ability of our parties, the existing parties and any parties that want to rise up and blossom in our country, from registering and getting voters to the polls while leaving unions and corporations free to do so without restriction. Hamstringing our parties, and thereby enhancing the power of unions and corporations, does not accomplish the stated goal of some to reduce the power of the special interests. I think we should be making our parties stronger, not weaker.

There is no rationale for denying our national parties access to funds that

we are willing to allow States to receive. The principal difference between this amendment and the bill before us is that this amendment would allow the national parties to raise some soft dollars, while the Shays bill would allow only the State and local parties to do so. The choice is not between one bill that allows soft money and a second bill that bans it. I think that is perfectly clear tonight. Shays-Meehan, as we know, has soft money. Both the Shays bill and this amendment permit limited amounts of soft money. This amendment simply says if we are going to allow the State parties to accept soft dollars, we ought to allow the national parties to do the same.

Members need to be aware that the contribution limits in this amendment have been significantly reduced in comparison to the previous amendment we had in the summer. Inflated claims about the usual amounts of money that could be donated under this amendment do not apply to this amendment as it is drafted.

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It has to be pointed out there are thousands of State and local parties, and there are six national parties to which the contributions can be given. So if you support the underlying bill, but oppose this amendment, you are basically saying it is perfectly acceptable for a corporation to give millions of dollars to a multitude of State and local parties, but it is somehow corrupt for them to give a limited amount to six national party interests. There is no logical reason that I can find for this distinction.

This amendment also provides for increased disclosure, which we all want, for targeted mass communications. The person who pays for the communication would have to disclose their identity within 24 hours of the purchase. That I believe is what the American people want. I would note that this disclosure provision is broader than that contained in the underlying bill, which applies only to broadcast communications. Disclosure provisions in this amendment would apply to all forms of communication, including newspaper ads, phone banks, et cetera.

Having described what is in the amendment, I take a moment to describe what is not in it and why. Most importantly, this amendment does not seek to ban issue advocacy. Twenty-five years of court decisions, from the Supreme Court on down, have made it perfectly clear that our Constitution does not permit the Federal Government to regulate issue advertisements.

Our first amendment protects the right of every American to speak out on issues of public concern, and it has been that way since the creation of this Nation. Politicians may want to use the power of government to attempt to silence their critics, which is what Shays-Meehan does, but I do not believe we should participate in that endeavor.

Real campaign finance reform encourages citizen participation. Real campaign finance reform protects our cherished rights to freely speak and associate. Real campaign finance reform preserves the important role our political parties play in our democracy. This amendment accomplishes these goals.

I want to thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) for drafting this and supporting it. I urge support of the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) may control 5 minutes of the time allocated to me, and that he may yield such time as he determines.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment. The chairman of this committee, as I have said in the past, has been, in my opinion, as good a chairman as I could possibly work with on the Committee on House Administration. He is open, he is fair, he is a pleasure to work with. We have worked very closely on election reform.

This House overwhelmingly passed election reform. It is now in the Senate. Hopefully, they will pass it soon, we will have a conference, and we will have a bill that we can all be very proud of. We agreed on that legislation. The gentleman made compromises; I made compromises.

On campaign finance reform, however, we have differed. Essentially it has been his position to oppose the Shays-Meehan alternative. In fact, the Shays-Meehan alternative could not be favorably reported out of committee. In my view, the Ney-Wynn amendment, which was changed last night, as I understand it, to reduce the limits, but, nevertheless, still has soft-money payments to the national committees, is in effect Shays-Meehan extraordinarily light, and in fact does not cover most of what Shays-Meehan covers. Furthermore, notwithstanding the reduction in the \$75,000 to \$20,000, it still provides for very, very, very substantial payments of soft money to various party committees, substantially more than does Shays-Meehan.

So if you want real campaign finance reform, you need to defeat this amendment, pass a motion to recommit, and pass Shays-Meehan finally and send that bill to the Senate, and then hopefully soon thereafter to the President of the United States for signature.

Mr. Chairman, I would say to my colleagues, we are coming to the end of the evening. We have defeated almost all of the amendments that were designed to undermine and defeat Shays-Meehan. We have one more step to take. I urge my colleagues to take it.